

bibliography.

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2. www.highbeam.com
3. <http://holocaust.hklaw.com>
4. www.military-quotes.com
5. Night, Elie Wiesel. 1960.
6. Oprah Winfrey Show 11/1/01-interview with Elie Wiesel shortly after 9/11 on the topic "What do we really know for sure?"
7. Rebecca Trounson, Los Angeles Times Sunday, April 28, 2002
8. Books that changed the world. Robert B. Downs. 1956.

*Essay Prompt: Oprah asks, "How is Elie Wiesel's novel, *Night*, relevant today?"

insensitivity, which mutates into dehumanization, the nefarious philosophy behind the Third Reich's annihilation juggernaut.

"Let the world learn of the existence of Auschwitz. Let everybody hear about it, while they can still escape..." -Night

Moshe the Beadle was spared to warn his people, a prophet on the wings of a twilight star before the destroying angel. Resolve was his raw motive. What is our resolve? *Night's* readers emerge illusion-less, cherubim standing in the sun to preach Wiesel's gospel of peace to the world. Recall *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler's gospel of war. He boasted, "The broad masses of a population are more amenable to the appeal of rhetoric than to any other force." Hitler wielded his book like a scythe, indoctrinating his underlings to reap hideous carnage. According to essayist Norman Cousins, "*For every word in Mein Kampf, 125 lives were lost; for every page, 4,700 lives; for every chapter, more than 1,700,000 lives.*" Now consider the counterstrike—if *Mein Kampf* can effectively advocate war, then *Night* can effectively advocate peace. War and peace comprise equilibrium of force. What is our resolve? To do with *Night* what Hitler did with *Mein Kampf*.

"Education is the best remedy that we possess to fight evil..." -Elie Wiesel

My mother teaches Alta High School's AP Literature program. Her curriculum includes *Night* because she says the novel "changes young people's lives for the better." Readers truly do develop a reverence for the dead and sensitivity toward others. They garner fierce resolve to publish its gospel of peace. At a young age, such refinement is imperative; it forges affectionate, courageous generations who will never forget that long night.

"When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." -Job 23:10

"To forget the victims means to kill them a second time." -Elie Wiesel

How do high school students revere the Jewish dead? Mathematically. History classes teach them surface facts. Martyrs remain as the novel describes them, "mere numbers." On the other hand, *Night* shaves, strips and scourges its readers, then feeds them to crematoriums. The story's "sad-eyed angel" ministers to us. Historical statistics cannot wield the impact of an eyewitness's testament, which brands like a six-pointed, yellow star. Wiesel reveals, "*If there was one basic obsession that was common to all the victims, it was not to allow the world to forget what had happened.*" In Birkenau, Jewish bodies were cremated by SS grunts; but by further objectifying these men, women, and children in cold charts and figures, we cremate their very souls. We blaspheme their sacrifice by not *empathetically* burning in refinement. *Night* has become the Kaddish for six million martyrs. When we read it, its whispers pierce our hearts and ascend to God. *Not* reading it simply sends its memories up in the spiraling silence of smoke.

"Indifference deadened the spirit. Here or elsewhere—what difference did it make? To die today or tomorrow, or later? The night was long and never-ending." -*Night*

Elie Wiesel believes that hope is not heaven's alighting snowflake, but rather an earthy exchange, something shared from human to human. We who read his autobiography acquire and act upon a dawning sensitivity toward people. We become intensely responsive to the sorrows of our fellow beings. Our aurum refinement burnishes a glow within us that was previously gilded in the ore of indifference, which Wiesel says diminishes people to death before they are dead. In *Night*, young Eliezer laments the corrosiveness of this ore: watching his father beaten, he feels no pain. He denies his God and surrenders to a hopeless void. "*A dark flame had entered into my soul and devoured it.*" This apathy climaxed when, in cattle cars, sons murdered fathers, gouging with jagged nails, grasping for morsels of bread. Modern societies in the robotic routines of everyday life must not let Social Darwinism tint commiseration's patina. Indifference is

Connors' Oprah essay

May 2006

baptism of fire.

“Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book!

That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!” -Job 19: 23, 24

Morning develops into a black and white daguerreotype. Jewish families breakfast.

Radios rasp. An ambush stunningly uncoils. Bullets hiss like asps that strike streets and sidewalks. Uniformed gunmen vandalize apartments while their rifles rattle. Upstairs, a mother defends three bleating children—ages five, four, and one. Lambs. A shadowed form foams over them like a rabid wolf. His lips drip. His eyes dilate in the dimness. His gun barks—three shots. Five-year-old Danielle’s bright, hazel eyes widen—the wolf shoots her in the face.

Having skimmed the above description, readers are perhaps already filing it into their attics of subconsciousness with all the other Holocaust horror stories they’ve heard.

The disturbing truth is that little Danielle was not a Jew slaughtered half a century ago; she was not a Holocaust victim; she was slain in Adora, Israel, by Palestinian militants on April 28, 2002.

Earth was refined by the Holocaust; nevertheless, earth’s inhabitants again devolve into their obsidian state, their indifferent, ore-hearted nature that breeds wolves from men.

Redeemingly, there exists an autobiography by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel which recounts his concentration camp experiences so brusquely, so boldly, so briefly, that its readers become vicarious victims. Oprah asks us why Elie Wiesel’s book *Night* is relevant today. *Night* is vital today because it rekindles the furnace of humanity’s refinement. Its readers are mercilessly submerged in the Holocaust’s molten forge, emerging golden. Their new alloy consists of three invaluable substances: first, reverence toward the dead; second, sensitivity toward others, and third, resolve to preach *Night*’s gospel of peace. *Night* is a baptism of fire.